



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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DEQ outlines streamlining efforts for maintaining services

BATON ROUGE – Today, the Department of Environmental Quality announced several streamlining efforts within the agency that will allow the department to continue its mission to protect human health and the environment.

The following streamlining measures were submitted to the Streamlining Commission which incorporated the proposals into its final recommendations. DEQ is closing its laboratory and is outsourcing the Laboratory Services Division, for an estimated savings of nearly \$1.5 million in rental charges. DEQ also closed its library, saving \$121,000. The department is continuing to review its contracts to further identify reduction opportunities. The department also has also found efficiencies in the mercury program and reduced contracts by \$215,000.

Additional changes DEQ enacted independently include the Remediation Division, tasked with oversight of chemical cleanups and spill prevention, and the Underground Storage Tank Division, that handles regulation of USTs, will move to the Office of Environmental Services. The Air Quality Assessment and Water Quality Assessment divisions will move under the purview of the Office of Environmental Compliance. All of these divisions were formerly in the Office of Environmental Assessment.

As part of the department's ongoing effort to be more efficient, DEQ continues to look for unique opportunities to save money and combine resources. For example, Paul Miller, Assistant Secretary over the Office of Environmental Assessment, will now move to Assistant Secretary of Environmental Compliance; incoming Secretary Peggy Hatch's former position. Hatch will become DEQ Secretary on Jan. 18. The elimination of an appointed position and the combining of duties are estimated to have more than \$200,000 in savings.

"These changes are being set forth in order to continue along the path of streamlining, cost-cutting and efficiency," DEQ Secretary Harold Leggett said. "With these changes, DEQ will be able to better serve the public while saving the state money, time and resources."

DEQ recently made other strategic streamlining changes within the agency. A cooperative agreement with the Louisiana Rural Water Association was reduced by \$47,600 and vacancies were eliminated throughout the department, saving \$274,067.

During fiscal 2008-2009, DEQ merged two divisions, eliminating an administrator position, which resulted in more than \$116,000 in savings. Also, the Contracts and Grants Division was merged with the Financial Services Division, eliminating a manager position, which led to \$77,850 in savings. Over the last two fiscal years, DEQ also reduced its vehicle fleet size by 22 percent, which amounts to 62 vehicles. The department has reduced the amount of professional services contracts over the last two years for an annual savings of \$2,146,910.